MEMO:

Date: October 7, 2002

To: All Sediment RFP proponents

Subject: Sediment RFP

Re: Questions and answers

To all potential bidders, the following questions have been asked and the responses to those questions are attached herein.

1. It will be important to identify the location of the samples taken from the Sea. What degree of resolution is required for the location? 1 meter or 30 meters? Or something else? I'm hoping a hand-held GPS will be sufficient.

   A. Degree of resolution? Most GPS units today are capable of 4-meter resolution and that is what is expected. To get meter or submeter resolution one would have to have engineering grade equipment and fixed base stations. Several years ago the Defense Dept allowed civilian access to real-time GPS and this provides for the approx 4-meter resolution for all commercial GPS units today.

2. For the kinds of information requested on the sediments, would something like bulk density be required or desirable? How about chemical analyses such as for salt content?

   A. Bulk density and salt content? The eventual use of this information will be for making evaluations relative to air quality impacts. It would seem likely that bulk density and salt content information would be helpful.

3. How deep a core are you expecting, and is stratification of the core an issue?

   A. Core depth? - Sediment sampling has its own set of standard procedures called for by EPA and other agencies (e.g. USGS). This office will not set a standard for this sampling effort. We will leave this to area experts and peer review to establish the acceptable core depth.

4. Are you expecting from this project an evaluation of how the results will relate to air quality? It seems that this is not in the RFP, but perhaps I should infer that you want it.

   A. The information generated by this effort will eventually be incorporated into air quality monitoring and modeling efforts, but these are not called for under this RFP.

5. Will the mapping include our working with the bathymetry to be able to describe what is exposed at each interval of dropping of the sea level, or will that be done later? That is, are we generating a 2-dimensional (acres only at 15 foot drop) or a 3-dimensional map?

   A. Bathymetry data? Bathymetry data available through the University of Redlands data base program is based on 5-foot contours. The data collected under this RFP should reflect a sampling strategy to adequately map sediments between existing high-water line and a potential water line with a 15-foot reduction, including areas between mapped contour lines. The map would probably indicate sediments exposed at a 5-foot drop of water, a 10-foot drop, and subsequently, the 15-foot drop.

6. Is California State Geologist Registration required for this job?

   A. No.

7. I assume an 18 October postmark is acceptable for the proposal and that it need not be actually received on or before 18 October; is this correct?

   A. Yes, proposals shall be submitted by mail postmarked no later than October 18, 2002.

8. Evaluation process is to take 30 days and "an additional 30 to 45 days to provide funding…" At what date will the successful bidder actually be notified of contract award so that the work can be planned and begun expeditiously? There isn't much time to get the work done (in cool weather), complete lab and office work, and get report in before September 2003.

   A. We will identify the bid winner as soon after we complete the peer review as is possible. However, the bid winner is subject to final approval by the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors, which meets monthly. Thereafter there are contract specifications to be developed, but we will work with the bid winner for notification as soon as we can without violating a thorough and fair competition.

9. Would a firm with no previous research experience on the Salton Sea itself, be handicapped on that basis alone in the evaluation process?

   A. There are no pre-selected competitors. There are firms with prior experience in this work at the Salton Sea, but that alone does not give them a specific competitive advantage. We ask the peer reviewers to consider the entire package of the proposal as outlined in the RFP.

10. Are protocols to be provided for sample collection and analysis? Or are protocols to be a part of the proposal?

    A. The proposal should contain protocols specific for each task in sufficient detail such that a qualified peer reviewer can reasonably make an assessment of the proposal's ability to yield quality and useful information. If the protocol is standard for the industry, then the proposal can simply reference the standard (e.g. EPA method 296A.1 or USGS field manual method 10.3a. Otherwise protocols should be of sufficient detail for peer comprehension

11. When would you expect manuscripts to be submitted for publication?

A. Obviously our goal in the long-term is for manuscripts to be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. It is not our intent to force that upon all contractors. Simply stated, many of our contractors are university or federal scientists involved in research where published manuscripts are expected. IF that route is chosen in lieu of broad general final reports then we want to encourage that and they would be expected to be submitted prior to contract completion. However, many firms want to file interim and final reports, not scientific manuscripts. That option is also satisfactory, but as with manuscripts, the final report must be filed prior to project completion. This simply allows peer-reviewed manuscripts to be submitted in lieu of another type of report and avoids unnecessary duplication of effort.

If you have any questions please contact Doug Barnum at (760) 777-1564 or email doug_barnum@usgs.gov.